

# Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

*Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not appear to have a significant child labor problem; however, children are found working in agriculture and are possibly victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Significant gaps in the law and a lack of policy to combat the worst forms of child labor provide insufficient protection, which result in children being vulnerable to exploitation.*

## Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable



## Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, some children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor,<sup>4986</sup> mainly in agriculture, which may put them at risk from applying harmful pesticides and carrying heavy loads.<sup>4987</sup>

There have been reports of trafficking in Saint Vincent, including children who are trafficked internally for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. However, the full extent of trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is unknown.<sup>4988</sup> There are also reports that minors continue to work informally and seasonally in the cultivation of marijuana, although research has not revealed whether or not these children work voluntarily or if they have been coerced.<sup>4989</sup>

## Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children (EWYP) Act sets the minimum age for

employment, including hazardous work, at 14.<sup>4990</sup> Children below the age of 18 are prohibited from working at night.<sup>4991</sup>

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	14
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

The EWYP Act also authorizes the Governor-General to establish regulations regarding the health, welfare, and safety of young persons and children.<sup>4992</sup> However, there are no regulations prohibiting hazardous occupations or conditions for children.

The Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines prohibits forced or slave labor.<sup>4993</sup> Causing or encouraging prostitution, commissioning sexual intercourse, or undertaking an indecent assault on a girl under the age of 15 is prohibited.<sup>4994</sup> No laws specifically address trafficking, although related offenses may be prosecuted under other provisions in the Penal Code.

The law provides for free and compulsory education through the Education Act of 2006, which states that all children ages 5 to 16 must attend school.<sup>4995</sup>

### **Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement**

Research found no evidence that the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has established a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for the enforcement of child labor laws.<sup>4996</sup> Within the Ministry, five inspectors are responsible for monitoring all labor issues and complaints, including child labor. During the reporting period, no inspections were conducted related to child

labor nor were there any reports of child labor complaints.<sup>4997</sup>

The Police Force is responsible for investigating trafficking in persons cases and referring the cases to the Ministry of Social Development.<sup>4998</sup> There were no cases of suspected trafficking in 2010.<sup>4999</sup>

### **Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

Although the worst forms of child labor do not appear to occur significantly in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, research found no evidence of policies to address existing child labor, including children working in agriculture and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>5000</sup> Research has also not revealed whether the Government keeps official statistics on the prevalence and scope of the worst forms of child labor.

### **Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

In 2010, the Children Against Poverty bridging program was launched with a total of 56 participating primary schools to develop children's skills through an engaging curriculum. The project goal was to use education as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty.<sup>5001</sup> The Ministry of Education also operates five multipurpose centers that offer technical and vocational education services to children ages 15 to 17 to prevent school dropouts.<sup>5002</sup> The question of whether these programs have an impact on the worst forms of child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

## Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the reduction of the worst forms of child labor in Saint Vincent and Grenadines:

### IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Amend the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act to make 18 the minimum age for engaging in hazardous work.

### IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture.

### IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Conduct a rigorous study to assess whether the worst forms of child labor are indicative of a small problem or a hidden problem that requires further follow up.
- Use the information obtained from the study to develop a national plan of action to address the worst forms of child labor, particularly for children in agriculture.

### IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS:

- Assess the impact that existing programs may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor.

<sup>4986</sup> Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are not available from the data sources that are used by USDOL. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. For more information on sources used for these statistics, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section.

<sup>4987</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting, January 28, 2011.*

<sup>4988</sup> U.S. Department of State, “St. Vincent and the Grenadines,” in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010*, Washington, DC, June 14, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/123357.pdf>.

<sup>4989</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting, January 28, 2011.*

<sup>4990</sup> ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Direct Request concerning Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) St. Vincent and the Grenadines (ratification: 2006) Submitted: 2010*, April 18, 2011; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/pdconv.pl?host=status01&textbase=iloeng&document=24850&chapter=9&query=Saint+Vincent+and+the+Grenadines%40ref&highlight=&querytype=bool&context=0>.

<sup>4991</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4992</sup> ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Direct Request concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) St. Vincent and the Grenadines (ratification: 2001) Submitted: 2009*, April 18, 2011; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/pdconv.pl?host=status01&textbase=iloeng&document=23561&chapter=9&query=%28Saint+Vincent+and+the+Grenadines%29+%40ref&highlight=&querytype=bool&context=0>.

<sup>4993</sup> Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, *Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, (October 27, 1979); available from <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Vincent/stvincent79.html>.

<sup>4994</sup> Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, *Criminal Code of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, (October 6, 1988).

<sup>4995</sup> ILO Committee of Experts, *Individual Direct Request C138: St. Vincent and the Grenadines (2010)*.

<sup>4996</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting, January 28, 2011.*

<sup>4997</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting, January 28, 2011.*

<sup>4998</sup> U.S. Department of State, “St. Vincent and the Grenadines,” in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2010*, Washington, DC, April 8, 2011, section 7d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/wha/154519.htm>. See also U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting, January 28, 2011.*

<sup>4999</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting, February 16, 2011.*

<sup>5000</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5001</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting, January 28, 2011.*

<sup>5002</sup> “CAP Bridging Program Officially Launched Today”, NBC Radio, [online], July 7, 2010 [cited April 18, 2011]; available from <http://www.nbcsvg.com/profiles/blogs/cap-bridging-program>.

<sup>5003</sup> UNICEF, *A Study of Child Vulnerability in Barbados, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines*, November 2006; available from [http://www.unicef.org/barbados/cao\\_resources\\_vulnerability.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/barbados/cao_resources_vulnerability.pdf).